

ASIAN GIANT HORNET STAKEHOLDER UPDATE #7 – JUNE 18, 2020

- [New confirmed sightings](#)
- [Are Asian giant hornets established in Washington State?](#)
- [Residents receiving trapping postcards](#)
- [Dr. Looney on Pacific Science Center webinar](#)
- [Don't squish me! Local insects, Asian giant hornets, and the case of mistaken identities](#)
- [Citizen scientist trapping](#)
- [WSDA begins testing AGH tracking options](#)
- [New data page on WSDA website](#)
- [WSDA trapping](#)
- [USDA update](#)
- [Canadian update](#)

NEW CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS

Below is a summary of new sightings since our last update. (Despite appearances to the contrary in the photos below, Asian giant hornets do not fly around with quarters.)

CUSTER SIGHTING – MAY 27



On May 27, a resident near Custer, Wash. found the dead specimen while walking on a roadway. The resident submitted a photo and report using WSDA's online Hornet Watch Report Form. On May 28, WSDA entomologists concluded that the photo appeared to show an Asian giant hornet. The specimen was collected and submitted for laboratory testing the same day. State and federal labs confirmed that the specimen was an Asian giant hornet on May 29 and subsequent testing showed it was a mated queen.

The hornet was detected near the location of a suspected Asian giant hornet bee kill in 2019. WSDA had already planned trapping in the area and will maintain that plan to try to find any colony that may be there.

You can [read WSDA's press release](#) about this find or [watch the virtual press conference](#) on YouTube.

Photo credit: Joel Nielsen

BELLINGHAM SIGHTING – JUNE 6



On June 6, a resident found a suspected live Asian giant hornet on their porch. The resident killed the specimen, photographed it, and reported it on [WSDA's Hornet Watch Reporting Form](#). WSDA was able to collect the specimen from the resident on June 9 and provided it to USDA on June 10. On June 11, state and federal labs confirmed that the specimen was indeed an Asian giant hornet. Based on the size and time of year, entomologists believe it is a queen. They were not able to confirm whether it was mated or not due to the condition of the specimen, which had been stepped on.

This sighting is more than 15 miles from the next closest confirmed sighting in Custer. WSDA will be setting additional traps in the area as part of their Asian giant hornet trapping this summer.

2019 BLAINE BEE HIVE KILL



WSDA received a new report of a 2019 bee hive kill this month. Details are still limited at this time due to a language barrier, but a resident near Blaine reported losing hives to suspected Asian giant hornets in September or October of 2019. The individual collected specimens and provided one, which WSDA received and identified as Asian giant hornet this week. Although this is a new report, it is very close to the two locations in Blaine where Asian giant hornet was confirmed last December.

Further testing is being done to determine if the specimen is a queen or a worker.

ARE ASIAN GIANT HORNETS “ESTABLISHED” IN WASHINGTON STATE?

Given the new detections, a common question we have been asked is whether Asian giant hornets are now established in Washington State. These multiple finds indicate there is a population in the area, but USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) does not consider the population to be established. APHIS considers a pest to be established in an area when there is evidence of a reproducing population *over multiple years*.

WSDA as well as local, state, federal, and international partners – and even local citizen scientists! - are working hard to prevent Asian giant hornets from establishing here.

RESIDENTS RECEIVING TRAPPING POSTCARDS

This week some residents in Whatcom and Jefferson counties are receiving postcards inviting them to be part of the WSDA citizen scientist trapping program. The postcards were sent to nearly 28,000 residences in rural areas where WSDA is especially interested in increasing public trapping efforts.

DR. LOONEY ON PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER'S SCIENCE IN THE CITY

Did you miss Dr. Chris Looney's presentation with the Pacific Science Center earlier this month? Don't worry, a [recording of the webinar](#) is available online!

DON'T SQUISH ME! LOCAL INSECTS, ASIAN GIANT HORNETS, AND THE CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITIES

WSDA – as well as virtually anyone who knows anything about insects in North America – has been fielding numerous questions about whether a given insect is an Asian giant hornet. For WSDA, this often comes in the form of a report with a killed insect – which almost never turns out to be an Asian giant hornet. In fact, many of the insects submitted – such as bumblebees – are beneficial insects.

WSDA has released a new blog to help educate the public about common local insects that are frequently mistaken for Asian giant hornets. The blog features side-by-side comparisons of Asian giant hornet and the particular insect, describing some of the key differences between them.

We encourage you to [read the blog](#) and to share it with others on your social media platforms or other means of connecting with your stakeholders to spread this message and save innocent insects.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST TRAPPING

NEW TRAPPING VIDEO

We are rapidly approaching July 1 – the day we've asked citizen scientist trappers to begin trapping for Asian giant hornets in Washington. While [trapping instructions](#) have been available on WSDA's hornet trapping webpage since April, WSDA recently made an instructional video available on the trapping webpage as well as on [WSDA's YouTube channel](#).

The video includes instructions on how to:

- build the trap and hang it
- check the trap and change the bait
- collect and clean specimens caught in the trap
- report your trap catches to WSDA

REPORTING TRAP CATCHES

Over 350 citizen scientist traps have been recorded on WSDA's citizen scientist trapping map. When putting up traps, don't forget to check and [REPORT YOUR TRAP CATCHES](#) every week. There are two ways for citizen scientist to report trap catches – depending on what has been caught in the trap.

- **NO BEES, WASPS, HORNETS** – Take a photo of the trap contents and send it along with the collection date and trap number to aghtrapping@agr.wa.gov.
- **CONTAINS BEES, WASPS, OR HORNETS** – The entire unsorted sample should be prepared per the trapping instructions and sent to WSDA. There are two options for submitting the sample.
 - Mail to: Chris Looney, WSDA, 1111 Washington St SE, Olympia WA, 98501
 - Take to a drop-off location. Drop-off locations will be added to the website by July 1.

As a reminder, trap catches should be submitted weekly as you check your traps. If you suspect you have an Asian giant hornet in your trap, photograph it and send the photograph along with the trap number and collection date to aghtrapping@agr.wa.gov BEFORE mailing in your samples.

In the unlikely event that you have nothing in your trap at your weekly check, replace the bait and send an email to aghtrapping@agr.wa.gov with the trap number and date you checked your trap and report that nothing was found in the trap.

WSDA BEGINS TESTING AGH TRACKING OPTIONS



Trapping is an important step in finding Asian giant hornets, but trapping alone will not eradicate them. WSDA entomologists have been working with the University of Washington to develop a method of tracking live Asian giant hornets back to their nest in order to eradicate them.

The process involves catching a live Asian giant hornet. Entomologists then have to attach a tiny transmitter to the insect, release it, and follow it back to the nest. Once a nest has been located, WSDA Pest Program staff will then eradicate the nest using a pesticide.

WSDA is beginning to test this system this month in order to be prepared for catching live Asian giant hornets. They will capture live

native wasps and attempt to attach the transmitter and follow it back to its nest. Native wasps are smaller than Asian giant hornets, so if they are able to fly with the device then it should also work for Asian giant hornets. A similar approach has been used in Europe for a different species and WSDA's entomologists are optimistic that it can work for tracking Asian giant hornets.

NEW DATA PAGE ON WSDA WEBSITE

We've had lots of questions and confusion about exactly what has been confirmed, as well as where and when the specimens were found. While you can obtain this information on our reported sightings page (by clicking on the red dots, which are the confirmed sightings) we have now created a [data page](#) to make this information accessible in a new way.

The page is currently being updated manually, but we hope to move to an automated system later in the season.

WSDA TRAPPING

WSDA has hired two technicians to hang and monitor traps for WSDA's trapping survey and to assist in eradication efforts later this year should WSDA be able to locate nests. The trappers will be very busy as between the Blaine/Custer grid and the new Bellingham grid, they have nearly 600 traps to check every week.

WSDA has completed the experimental spring trapping for queens. No queens were caught in the experimental traps.

USDA UPDATE

USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is investigating the Asian giant hornet to conduct genomic sequencing as part of the ARS Ag100Pest initiative. They have a new [blog about this research](#) that makes for an interesting read.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) also has a page about [Asian giant hornet](#). The page hosts several helpful resources for pollinator health enthusiasts, such as identification tools under "acknowledgements" including a [Bee Mite ID Guide](#) and [Exotic Bee ID guide](#).

CANADIAN UPDATE

As we mentioned in our last update, Canada had their first detection of Asian giant hornet in 2020 near Langley, British Columbia this past May. Subsequent testing has confirmed that the specimen was a

queen. No additional specimens have been found so far this year, although they expect additional specimens as the season progresses.

The British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture completed their spring trapping for queens. Like WSDA, they did not trap any queens. They also continue to receive and review Canadian reports of suspected Asian giant hornets. So far, no additional reports have been confirmed.

Canadian authorities will also begin trapping in July for Asian giant hornets. British Columbia and Washington State entomologists are working closely together to coordinate their response in hopes of eradicating Asian giant hornet.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ASIAN GIANT HORNETS

[Like and follow the WSDA Facebook page](#)

[Join the Asian Giant Hornet Watch Facebook group](#)

[Get WSDA Pest Program updates](#)

[Sign up to receive WSDA press releases](#)

[Read and sign up for the WSDA Ag Briefs blog](#)

[Follow WSDA on Twitter](#)

[Follow WSDA on Instagram](#)

[Subscribe to WSDA's YouTube channel](#)